

Understanding Disease and Wellness in the Context of Drug Use

Outreach workers should know that several harmful conditions can affect the mind and body and are directly related to use of alcohol or other drugs. Outreach workers should know about addiction-related diseases and their risk factors, including the recognition of the signs and symptoms of infectious diseases to make the appropriate referrals to medical treatment.

I. HIV/AIDS

It is important to understand how HIV/AIDS infects substance users through unsafe injection practices and through unsafe contact with sexual partners. This knowledge can be used to educate and refer at-risk individuals to the appropriate health professionals.

Knowledge

- Understand the epidemiology of the infectious disease;
- Understand the role of substance use in transmission and progression of disease;
- Understand the role of substance abuse treatment in addressing disease and wellness.

Skills

- Be able to describe risk factors to clients;
- Be able to describe risk reduction information to clients;
- Be able to describe symptoms and basic disease-related information to clients.

Attitudes

- Appreciate the variance in cultural beliefs and values that may influence health practices.

II. HEPATITIS

It is important to understand how hepatitis B and C infect substance users through unsafe injection practices and unsafe contact with sexual partners. This knowledge can be used to educate and refer at-risk individuals to the appropriate medical professionals.

Knowledge

- Understand the epidemiology of infectious diseases;
- Understand the role of substance use in the transmission and progression of disease;
- Understand the role of substance abuse treatment in addressing disease and wellness.

Skills

- Be able to describe risk factors to clients;
- Be able to describe risk reduction information to clients;
- Be able to describe symptoms and basic disease-related information to clients.

Attitudes

- Appreciate the variance in cultural beliefs and values that may influence health practices.

III. TUBERCULOSIS

It is important to understand how tuberculosis infects substance users through close contact with infected individuals. This knowledge can be used to educate and refer at-risk individuals to the appropriate medical professionals.

Knowledge

- Understand the epidemiology of infectious diseases;
- Understand the role of substance use in the transmission and progression of disease;
- Understand the role of substance abuse treatment in addressing disease and wellness.

Skills

- Be able to describe risk factors to clients;
- Be able to describe risk reduction information to clients;
- Be able to describe symptoms and basic disease-related information to clients.

Attitudes

- Appreciate the variance in cultural beliefs and values that may influence health practices.